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right, and many of our own body think the same. His declaration we cannot possibly *approve* of, because it is at variance with our recorded opinions. But, how are we to act? Our resolutions do not impute to him wilful error. And shall we censure a man for honestly differing from us in opinion, for not acknowledging errors which he thinks he has not committed? No. We do not pretend to infallibility. We are a party in the case, and our decision, however sincere, may be erroneous. The matter is now before the public. Let it decide between Dr. Dickson and us." This is the true exposition of the Synod's sentiments. And let me tell Observer before we part, that the members of the last Synod were so thoroughly satisfied that Dr. Dickson was a man, "more sinned against than sinning," that even if he had been chargeable with something worse than simple error, they would have thought it hard that he should be punished, while the persons, by whom, according to the spirit of their own recent resolutions, he had been insulted, persecuted and calumniated, were allowed to remain unpunished.

Observer, in his second letter, *proves*, that Dr. Black did not vote for quashing the discussion relative to Dr. Dickson *in limine*, from the fact that Dr. William Neilson was the mover of the amendment to that purpose. This *argument* I hand over to "An Actor," as furnishing materials for another syllogism. Observer's obstinate repetition of his mistatements has extorted these remarks. Your's, &c.

Feb. 2d, 1814.

VERUS.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,

IN your Magazine for January, "A Burgher Seceder" has pub-

lished what he calls a defence of the conduct of that body in granting a supply of preaching to some members of the congregation of Clare, who dissented from Mr. Adams, and the Synod of Ulster.

From the indeterminate manner in which it had been mentioned in a former number of your justly esteemed Magazine, that the spirit of obstinacy and illiberality had been fostered by *Seceders*, I conceived it proper to to tell the world *what class of Seceders* had interfered. If their conduct should meet with the approbation of the enlightened and liberal, I was sorry they should be deprived of it. If blame,—I thought they had the best right to bear it.

At the same time I did transiently express my most unqualified disapprobation of their conduct; and the more I reflect upon the affair, the more fixed am I in my opinion, that the disseminating members of Clare acted like "hot-headed bigots," and the Burghers who supplied them with preaching, in "an unchristian-like and illiberal manner;" nor has all the sophistry employed by "A Burgher Seceder," to make the matter appear specious, been able to make me change that opinion. Indeed, had the defence, so named, not been signed "A Burgher Seceder," I should have been tempted to believe it came from the pen of a Jesuit; such a striking similarity does the whole tenor of it bear to the sophistical quibbling usually employed by that order, to varnish a bad cause. His displeasure that the affair has met the public eye, under pretence that it has been misrepresented; his descanting upon the fidelity and moral character of the Burgher ministers, forgetting that self-praise is not to be esteemed honourable commendation, and that their character, as to these qualities, was

never called in question : his dexterity at keeping out of view the *real grounds* upon which the charges of illiberality, bigotry, &c. were founded, and then, upon *entirely different grounds*, attempting to refute them ; and his enumeration of instances in which the members of the Synod of Ulster, or "of the liberal and self-denied communion of your Antiburgher correspondent," granted preaching to those who applied for it ; instances not in the slightest manner similar, because the grounds upon which preaching was requested and granted, were *totally different* : these, with his statement of the true principles of religious liberty, by which, he says, Seceders, (Burghers, he means,) have conducted themselves in this, and in every similar case, would reflect no little honour upon one of that fraternity. I have no inclination, nor is it my immediate business, to fill the pages of your Magazine with a detailed confirmation of those charges. This will, no doubt, be done by the person who first brought the subject before the public. I have told the world what class of Seceders fostered illiberality in the congregation of Clare. I have, I hope, prevented any odium from being attached to the mere term Seceder, or to that class of Seceders to which I belong. This was all I intended.

But, gentlemen, I did not deny that the conduct of the Burghers, in the instance in question, was illiberal, and unchristian-like. Let the grounds upon which the charges were founded, be kept, and the charge refuted ; and I shall retract all I said.

Now I ask "A Burgher Seceder" if the conduct alluded to be christian-like and liberal, why does he so artfully attempt to conceal the grounds upon which the charges were founded ? What was the grand reason why the disaffected

members of Clare applied to his body for preaching ? What was the leading principle upon which the often and openly avowed reason why they would no longer attend upon the ministrations of Mr. Adams, nor remain in connection with the Synod of Ulster ? It was because Mr. Adams had dared to lend his feeble aid to the cause of civil and religious liberty ; because they knew the Ministers of the Synod of Ulster were friends to Catholic emancipation ; because, enjoying the blessings of civil and religious liberty themselves, they wished them to be extended to their Catholic countrymen. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.* Upon *this ground alone*, the disaffected members of Clare were denominated "hot headed bigots ;" upon *this ground alone*, the conduct of the Burghers who supplied them with preaching, was denominated unchristian-like and illiberal ; upon *this ground alone* let their conduct be vindicated, and the charges, for my part, shall be retracted.

Did the Burghers inquire of the Clare members who applied for preaching, what moved them to relinquish connection with Mr. Adams and the Synod ? And was it told them, that the grand reason was because Mr. Adams had signed the petition in favour of Catholics, and the Synod approved of his conduct ; and that had it not been upon *this single principle*, the conduct of Mr. Adams would never have been called in question ? And did the Burghers upon *this ground* foment discord in the society ? And will "A Burgher Seceder" after all, pretend that the conduct of that body was christian-like and liberal ? Or that they did not "blow up the spark into a flame ?

Now, I ask, if in the present state, or past history of the Antiburgher communion, "A Burgher

Seceder" can produce a *single instance* in which preaching was granted to *any people* upon such grounds? Was this the case in any of the instances dragged into notice by "A Burgher Seceder?" Nay, let *any one instance whatever* be produced, in which preaching was granted by Antiburghers, upon the *professed*, or even *alleged* motive of the officiating Minister's being a friend to civil and religious liberty. What, then, to the purpose is the enumeration of instances in which Antiburghers have granted preaching to those who applied for it, when the grounds upon which it was applied for and granted, were *toto cælo* different? Where, then, serves the mention of the formation of congregations in Clanmace, near Newbliss, or the division of the congregation of Masslane, in Dublin? What to the purpose is the distorted account of the erection in the Four Towns? So far from being formed upon the principle mentioned by "A Burgher Seceder," it is notorious, that many of the persons who encouraged the application for preaching, were *Antiburghers*, who joined in the congregation because they were at a great distance from any place of worship where they could conscientiously join in communion. Let the principle, then, that actuated the Clare members, be attended to, and all the specious sophistry of "A Burgher Seceder" in attempting to make Antiburghers appear as bad as himself, can serve no other purpose than to exhibit his *dexterity* in defending a bad cause. If, indeed, what he says, page 11, were admitted, he might triumph securely. "Whatever God, to whom alone he is accountable in this matter, may judge concerning him, no man has a right to hinder him, or even to ascribe his conduct to base or unworthy motives." Had the Clare party applied for

preaching, *under the circumstances*, without assigning any motives for their conduct, we could have given a pretty shrewd guess at them. But they have been too candid to leave us under the necessity of guessing at them. They made no secret of them: they avowed them: they gloried in them. They declared *unanimously and publicly*, in the face of the Presbytery which met for the express purpose of examining the business, that had Mr. Adams not signed the Catholic petition, they never would have applied to a Burgher presbytery for preaching. Such was the publicly and uniformly avowed motive that actuated the disaffected party in Clare. Such was the ground upon which preaching was granted them by a Burgher Presbytery; and such a motive, without fear of confutation upon rational grounds, or of being disowned by all intelligent Antiburghers, I aver to be in the highest degree base and unworthy; and if Burghers do not disown the person who would justify such conduct, I am sure they should do so.

Let, then, the motive that actuated the disaffected members of Clare, be kept in view; let it be always remembered that they abandoned connection with Mr. Adams and the Synod, because he and they were friends to civil and religious liberty, and if ever the conduct of those who granted them preaching be vindicated, let it be upon this ground, upon which alone it needs vindication. The conduct of the Burghers was not denominated *unchristian-like and illiberal*, merely because they preached where they were invited, but because they preached to those who abandoned their Minister upon the *grand and openly avowed reason*, that he was a friend to civil and religious liberty.

Let Burghers take all opportuni-

ties of making proselytes; let them propagate the doctrines of Christianity, when and where they can find opportunity, without fear of censure from "the liberal and self-denied communion of your Anti-burghar correspondent." But let them not foster a spirit of bigotry and intolerance, as opposite to the benevolent and peaceable spirit of the gospel of Jesus, as heaven is opposite to hell, and then be displeased because the world is told that they were the persons who did so.

"A Burgher Seceder" asks "what precept of Christianity did they violate?" (i.e. the Burghers, in preaching to the disaffected members of Clare,) and answers, "surely not that one—whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." Now, put the case, (which, indeed, the conduct of the Burghers makes scarcely supposable,) that a Burgher Minister had signed the Catholic petition, and a part of his congregation, *upon this ground*, had applied for preaching to another communion: I ask, would the Burgher feel pleased, if preaching were granted *upon this ground*? Would he wish others, in this case, to do to him as he has done? Would he call the motive that actuated the one and the other, christian-like and liberal? No, certainly; most justly would he pronounce it quite the contrary. And without the slightest fear of being disowned by the enlightened and liberal of that communion of which I have the honour and happiness to be a member, I would join him in pronouncing it as opposite to Christianity and liberality, as light is to darkness, or as heaven is to hell; and if ever Burghers give complete justification of their conduct in sending preachers to Clare, as "A Burgher Seceder says (page 12,) is possible, let them remember the ground up-

on which alone that justification is necessary.

With the highest respect for the moral character of the Burgher Ministers, and their fidelity in discharging the duties of Christian pastors; and at the same time wishing them a copious effusion of the spirit of liberality, and christian benevolence, I am,

Gentlemen,

AN ANTIBURGHER SECEDER.

Feb. 10th, 1814.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING some business in the town of Larne, in October last, I returned by the way of Templepatrick. When about four miles from Larne, near where a chapel stood within a few perches of the road, I was met by an acquaintance. After we had some conversation, he told me he was going to chapel. I was much surprised, as I had known him to be a stiff Protestant, and I asked him when he had turned Papist. He said he had not yet done so, nor did he think he ever should: but that did not prevent him from sometimes going to chapel, as the priest, a young man of excellent character, who had got a liberal education chiefly in our own country, always preached an excellent sermon, accompanied with prudent advice. My acquaintance also added, that a great many of the inhabitants of the place, of every religious denomination, frequently went to hear these sermons; and that if I had time to stop, he was sure I would be well pleased. I thought that impossible, as I had always held the Catholics in the utmost abhorrence; but in compliment to my friend, I went along with him, well convinced in my own